



## Sustaining our training lands ensures our ability to train future Soldiers

ur natural resources on Fort Carson and Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site sustain an impressive amount of activity and uses. Our lands are foremost to successful Army training and preparation for real-world applications. Keeping those lands as close to natural conditions as possible is vital to our mission of training combat ready Soldiers.

The lands also provide natural habitat for a wealth of animal and plant species. Cultural resources from bygone eras have a protected status on these lands. Lastly, we use these lands for a variety of recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Historic sites managed by Fort Carson and PCMS include sheepherder camps, cattle and sheep ranches (buildings and support features), homesteads, stagecoach stations, coal mines, helium wells, roads, trails, rock art and World War II Army hospital and military engineering facilities. The historic Santa Fe Trail passes just west of the PCMS.

Soldiers arriving at Fort Carson receive information on how to protect the natural resources they train on. This ensures that future generations of Soldiers will also have these assets for training exercises and weapons qualification. Environmental training includes such topics such as:

- How to maneuver around sensitive wetland areas,
- Proper spill control,
- Cultural artifact discovery notification process,
- Procedures for the disposal of hazardous waste and
- Education on "packing it in, packing it out" when it comes to waste that inevitably accompanies a downrange mission.

This training can also offer commanders and Soldiers the chance to incorporate certain "off limits" areas in their training scenarios as taught during Maneuver Damage Control classes. Environmental requirements do not have to be seen as a liability, they can be viewed as a challenge to incorporate into a training mission. An example is considering an environmentally-sensitive area as a chemically or biologically contaminated area to be avoided.

People enjoying recreational opportunities on post also need to be aware of their impact on our training lands. When fishing, dispose of fishing lines to prevent birds from getting ensnared in discarded lines. Use trash dumpsters for their intended purpose – not to dispose of old furniture.



One of the many sensitive species inhabiting Fort Carson lands is the Mexican spotted owl.

Most of the wildlife on Fort Carson lands have a federal protected status and require awareness and education as to how to interact or not interact with them. Our diverse habitats are home to many animals from mountain lions and black bears, to a variety of raptors and the very small Texas horned lizard. Coexistence is crucial to ensure both these species and our training mission survive.

For more information on the Army's Natural Resources Program, log on to the U.S. Army Environmental Center's website at http://aec.army.mil/usaec/natural/natural03.html and to find out more about the Army's Cultural Resources Program, visit their site at http://aec.army.mil/usaec/cultural/index.html.